



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Scores High in Ranking of Healthiest States

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota ranks sixth in the United Health Foundation's *America's Health: State Health Rankings* 2005 report, according to State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. North Dakota ranked seventh in 2004 and 12th in 2001.

The State Health Rankings are a comprehensive, state-by-state analysis of the health of the American population. According to the report, North Dakota ranks first with the lowest violent crime rate and fewest infectious disease cases. In addition, the state ranks in the top 10 for its strong high school graduation rate, low cancer death rate and low premature death rate.

The report also lists the state's challenges, including high prevalence of obesity and limited access to adequate prenatal care.

"The State Health Rankings confirm once again that North Dakotans enjoy an outstanding quality of life," said Governor John Hoeven. "We are proud of our successes and are eager to focus on our challenges as we work together to build a healthy North Dakota."

Each year, the United Health Foundation publishes *America's Health: State Health Rankings*. The purpose of the rankings is to stimulate public conversation about health in the United States, as well as provide information to facilitate citizen participation in maintaining or improving community health. The 2005 report is available on the United Health Foundation website at www.unitedhealthfoundation.org.

"This report highlights the importance of our state's public health infrastructure," Dwelle said. "Public health is vital and essential because it protects, maintains and improves the health of our citizens. The State Health Rankings can help guide our efforts as we work to safeguard the health of every North Dakotan."

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